

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-08

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, UV

SUBJECT: MINISTERIAL VISIT AND COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE
PROBLEMS.

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 0975

SUMMARY: DEPT HAS BEEN ADVISED BY BOTH COMSAT GENERAL
(COMGEN) AND GTE THAT NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RAISED PARA 2
REFTEL ARE PRIMARILY RESULT OF EITHER MISINTERPRETATION
OF TERMS OF CONTRACTS BETWEEN GOUV AND COMGEN, AND
GOUV AND GTE, OR WERE DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES GENERALLY
BEYOND THE CONTROL OF THESE US CORPORATIONS. BOTH COMGEN
AND GTE HAVE MET WITH GOUV OFFICIALS DURING THEIR
RECENT VISIT (REFTEL). THESE DISCUSSIONS WERE AMICABLE
AND HAVE RESULTED IN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE
PARTIES OF THE STATUS OF THE EARTH STATION AND PLANS FOR
CORRECTIVE ACTION. END SUMMARY

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1. THE DEPT HAS TALKED WITH COMSAT GENERAL (COMGEN),
GTE, AND EXIM BANK ABOUT RECENT VISIT TO US BY MINISTER
OF POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS, PAUL ISMAEL OUEDRAGO,
TO DISCUSS UPPER VOLTA'S DISSATISFACTION WITH OPERATION
TO DATE OF EARTH STATION (REFTEL).

2. IN MEETING WITH COMGEN REPRESENTATIVES ON MARCH 17,

1978, DEPARTMENT WAS INFORMED FOLLOWING:

A. COMGEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM AS A TECHNICAL ADVISER (PARA 2 REFTTEL), HAS BEEN MISINTERPRETED WITH RESPECT TO ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR EARTH STATION HARDWARE AND SYSTEM OPERATION. ACCORDING TO COMGEN, ITS CONTRACT WITH GOUV FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON THIS PROJECT PROVIDES ONLY FOR MONITORING OF IN-PLANT TESTING, MONITORING OF ON-SITE INSTALLATION AND TESTING, AND SUBMISSION OF APPROPRIATE REPORTS TO GOUV OFFICE OF POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS (OPT). COMGEN REPS STRESSED THAT CONTRACT WITH OPT IS FOR MONITORING EARTH STATION SYSTEM, NOT SUPERVISING IT.

B. COMGEN REPS STATED THAT UNDER TERMS OF CONTRACT IT ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SYSTEM, SPARE PARTS, OR HARDWARE. COMGEN REPS CONFIRMED THAT CORPORATION'S TECHNICAL PERSONNEL DID DEPART UPPER VOLTA AFTER DECEMBER 10, BUT ONLY AFTER HAVING CONCLUDED THAT PORTION OF THE WORK FOR WHICH THEY WERE THEN RESPONSIBLE AND ONLY AFTER PERMISSION TO LEAVE UPPER VOLTA WAS RECEIVED FROM GOUV OPT. COMGEN REPS SAY THAT CORPORATION REPRESENTATIVE, MR. FRANKLIN, WHO WAS IN UPPER VOLTA FROM AUGUST 9 - OCTOBER 4 AND OCTOBER 17 - DECEMBER 17, SUBMITTED WEEKLY REPORTS TO OPT DURING FIRST PERIOD AND HELD WEEKLY MEETINGS DURING UNCLASSIFIED

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SECOND PERIOD, AND THAT MINUTES OF THESE MEETINGS WERE PROVIDED TO OPT. ACCORDING COMGEN, THEY RESPONDED TO ALL COMPLAINTS FROM GOUV OF WHICH THEY WERE AWARE; AND THAT COMGEN HAD NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR EQUIPMENT DELIVERIES OR DELAYS.

C. COMGEN REPS CONCLUDED THAT MANY OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN UPPER VOLTA AFTER DECEMBER 10 WERE CAUSED BY LINKAGES BETWEEN THE TERRESTRIAL NETWORKS AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS RATHER THAN PROBLEMS WITHIN EARTH STATION ITSELF. COMGEN

REPS REPORT THAT SUBSTANCE ABOVE WAS COVERED DURING THEIR MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON WITH GOUV AMBASSADOR YAGUIBOU AND OPT MINISTER OUEDRAGO.

D. ACCORDING COMGEN, THE DISCUSSION HELD IN WASHINGTON WITH GOUV OFFICIALS WAS AMICABLE AND RESULTED IN AGREEMENT THAT COMGEN WOULD CONTINUE TO FUNCTION AS TECHNICAL ADVISOR ON THE PROJECT.

3. DEPARTMENT MET WITH GTE REPRESENTATIVES AFTER THEIR

CONSULTATIONS WITH YAGUIBOU AND OUEDRAGO, AND GTE HAS PROVIDED DEPARTMENT THE FOLLOWING VIEWS IN A LETTER:

A. ACCORDING GTE, ITS CONTRACT WITH GOUV CALLS FOR SUPPLY OF AN EARTH STATION AND A TELEX SWITCH, I.E., A SWITCH FOR ROUTING OF TELEX (RECORD AS OPPOSED TO VOICE) TRAFFIC. UNDER THE TERMS OF THE CONTRACT, THE REQUIRED DELIVERY DATE FOR THE EARTH STATION IS APRIL 5, 1978 AND THE TELEX SWITCH APRIL 5, 1979. THE EARTH STATION WAS DELIVERED EARLY HAVING BEEN PROVISIONALLY ACCEPTED BY GOUV OPT AND PUT INTO COMMERCIAL OPERATION ON DECEMBER 10, 1977. GTE EXPECTS THE TELEX SWITCH TO BE IN OPERATION BEFORE MID-1978.
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B. RE THE SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS RAISED IN PARA 2 REFTEL, GTE POINTS OUT THE FOLLOWING:

(1) THE EARTH STATION HAS BEEN CAPABLE OF PROVIDING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE CONTINUOUSLY SINCE DECEMBER 10 WITH EXCEPTION OF TWO AND ONE-HALF DAYS OF OUTAGE DURING A WEEKEND, AND FIVE HOURS OF OTHER DOWN TIME; THIS AMOUNTS TO CONTINUOUS SERVICE NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE TIME DURING THE THREE MONTH PERIOD.

(2) SINCE DECEMBER 10, GTE HAS HAD NUMEROUS COMMUNICATIONS WITH OPT ON STATUS OF SYSTEM AND ACTIONS PLANNED.

(3) ALLEGATIONS OF LONG DELAYS IN DELIVERY OF MATERIALS AND TELEX SWITCH ARE NOT CONSISTENT WITH FACT GTE HAS PERFORMED PRIOR TO CONTRACT DELIVERY DATE.

(4) DISRUPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS IS IN PART DUE TO OPERATOR-TO-OPERATOR PROCEDURES, LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS WHICH GTE STATES ARE

BEYOND ITS RESPONSIBILITY AS SUPPLIER OF AN OPERATIONAL EARTH STATION.

4. GTE ADVISES DEPARTMENT THAT DURING FEBRUARY-MARCH IT HAS HAD FOUR MEETINGS WITH EITHER MINISTRY OR SENIOR GOUV OPT OFFICIALS. ACCORDING GTE, THESE MEETINGS HAVE BEEN CORDIAL AND HAVE RESULTED IN A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF STATUS AND PLANS FOR REMAINING CORRECTIVE ACTIONS.

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5. WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY EXIM BANK THAT THEIR MEETING
WITH GOUV OFFICIALS WENT WELL, AN EXTENSION FOR LOAN

PAYMENT WAS INFORMALLY REQUESTED BY GOUV OFFICIALS,
AND EXIM BANK AWAITS FORMAL REQUEST FOR EXTENSION. VANCE

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